

# **Chapter One:** **Planning Principles and Processes**

## **I. Planning Principles:**

The public planning process provides a way to establish a parks master plan that identifies existing resources, involves an understanding of community needs and organizes critical information into goals, policies and projects to implement and manage parks and recreation services.

The Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) publication **Planning for Parks, Recreation and Open Space in Your Community** provides useful guidelines for the Parks Master Plan. The following discussion quotes extensively from this publication. “The IAC requires communities to prepare and adopt comprehensive park plans which provide guidance for the growth and development of a community’s park and recreation system. To be eligible for state grant funds these plans must include a planning area description; an analysis of existing park sites and facilities; the identification of community park and recreation goals; methods utilized for public input; an analysis of system needs; recommendations for system improvements and the prioritization of these improvements in a Six-Year Capital Improvement Program.”

**Parks System.** The City of Sequim should establish a park system (as opposed to conserving discreet parcels of land evaluated independently). Parks should be linked together by trail systems and linked to major activity centers such as schools, community centers, and employment centers.

**Greenway Connection to the Non-motorized Transportation system and the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT).** For the City of Sequim, this means that all existing parks and new parks, when possible, should have a greenway connection to other systems including the ODT, according to the *Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*.

**Coordination with County, State and Federal Organizations.** To be most effective, City staff and the Citizens’ Parks Advisory Board should participate in regional planning activities to create, enhance and/or develop roadways and highways to effect the creation of a countywide parks/trails recreational system. Establish design criteria for trails programs utilizing existing right-of-ways, access areas, public utility easements, abandoned railways and natural resource areas such as wetlands, streams and rivers. Establish liaison with Washington State departments of: Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife, Transportation, State Parks and Recreation; Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe; Port of Port Angeles; Olympic National Park and the U.S. Forest Service; along with the Sequim Parks Board and other appropriate local, state and surrounding county agencies in order to establish a program and to create linkages to other recreational resources and destinations in the region.

**Land Use Inventory.** Vacant lands, identified in the land use inventory, will be the focus for identifying potential parks. The City of Sequim's land use inventory shall periodically identify and update parcels that are vacant and under-utilized in relation to their zoning status. Reviewing the zoning district catalogs containing the land use inventory, the map of the geographic areas, and utilizing the GIS system, will be required in order to identify potential properties for parks and open spaces.

**Challenges and Opportunities Map.** Using available information, a "challenges and opportunities map" should be created. This will include mapping the existing system, highlighting vacant land, and noting any features that might constrain or enhance park use on these lands.

**Field Research of Candidate Sites.** The City staff and the Citizens' Parks Advisory Board need to conduct a thorough research of candidate sites for parks designation. Once identified, we should note the unique features, scenic vistas, access to the site, linkage to the non-motorized transportation (trail) system, surrounding features; acquisition; development/construction cost estimates and possible liabilities. We should consider the potential of each area for different types of uses; for example, some critical areas may be only suitable for eco-tourism, bird watching, and other passive activities, etc., while other spaces may have potential for playing fields or other active and passive uses.

**Planning, Public Works and Development Review.** The public planning process provides a way to establish a comprehensive plan that:

- identifies existing resources,
- involves an understanding of community needs,
- and organizes critical information into goals, policies and projects for implementation and management of the parks and recreation services.

This plan establishes a basis for encouraging a continued and coordinated approach to park and trail development, natural resource preservation and provision of recreation services considering the incorporated communities, schools, state and federal lands, and the private sector. It should also address the relationship of recreation and tourism to the City of Sequim, and the Sequim-Dungeness Valley region.

During the development review process, planners should require that individual dedicated pieces of open space contribute meaningfully to the desired park and open space system and provide means of linking to the areas described in the *Non-Motorized Transportation (trail) Plan*. Bike paths and trails, can frequently be incorporated into public works projects. This is already being done in some areas and will continue with future projects.

**Financing.** Financing methods must be identified or developed to provide for

future needs such as: trail connections, property acquisition, open space acquisition, maintenance and other capital improvements as approved either through impact fees, budgeted general fund allocations, contributions to a capital reserve fund, in-kind services and materials, grants etc.

## **II. Background Information for Parks and Recreation Planning:**

The City of Sequim has prepared two inventories for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update which provide useful information for identifying potential park sites. Also, existing documents and plans have been prepared focusing on various aspects of the park and recreation system in the City. Those documents are briefly discussed in this section.

**1) Public Facilities Inventory** (dated 5/7/2005). This inventory is arranged by Section and includes a description (e.g. City Well Fields on Port Williams Rd., City Hall, Kirner Park, etc.), number of parcels, and acreage for each item.

**2) Critical Areas Inventory -WETLANDS** (dated 5/11/2005). This inventory is also arranged by Section and includes number of wetland parcels, acreage, and wetland percentage. A preliminary wildlife inventory was also prepared identifying species, locations, functions and needs. Long-Range Management Alternatives for the Dungeness Roosevelt Elk Herd (J. Sage, Point No Point Treaty Council) was also incorporated into this plan's goals and policies.

**3) GIS-based Maps.** The City of Sequim has combined this information on a base map for the use of the Parks Master Plan. Public facilities (schools, parks), other items from the public facilities inventory. Wetlands and critical areas are also identified.

**Maps included as Appendix E are as follows:**

- A. Vicinity Map**
- B. City of Sequim Zoning Map**
- C. City of Sequim Park Master Plan Map**
- D. City of Sequim Neighborhood Park Accessibility Map**
- E. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (2005)**
- F. "Walk Your Way to Health" Map**
- G. Critical Areas/Natural Resource Lands**

**4) Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Trails Plan (1997).** This plan includes priority projects for trail development and enhancement. Some of the proposals have already been realized, but a number of projects have not yet been completed. A copy of the prioritized list of projects is attached, as is the

map from the plan, which indicates the location of each project by priority number.

**5) Downtown Sequim: Walk Your Way to Health in Sequim, 2005.** This effort identifies and maps pedestrian routes. The maps are located on each side of the public restroom located on Sequim Avenue, Seal Street park, the water demonstration site, Sequim Transit Center and at city hall. The maps depict four walking routes throughout areas of the city. The routes are marked on the map in colors that coincide with footprints on the sidewalks of the routes. The walks take you on a path through the city that provides a tour of the downtown area, or a portion of the Olympic Discovery Trail. The map also points out areas of interest to residents, as well as visitors, such as the police department, city hall, the transit center, and the library to name a few.

### **III. Definitions:**

Below are terms commonly used in this plan that have been defined for increased clarity.

**Active recreation:** Leisure time activities, usually of a more formal nature and performed with others, often requiring equipment and taking place at prescribed places, sites or fields.

**Capital Improvement:** Physical improvements involving land acquisition, site and facility development generally exceeding \$5,000 and has a useful life of 5 years or more.

**Critical areas:** Critical areas include the following areas and ecosystems: wetlands; areas with a critical recharging effect on aquifers used for potable water; fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas; frequently flooded areas; and geologically hazardous areas. RCW36.70A.030(5)

**Ecotourism:** Tourism involving travel to areas of natural or ecological interest, typically under the guidance of a naturalist, for the purpose of observing wildlife and learning about the local environment.

**Geographical area:** For the purposes of this plan, geographical areas are the sections of the City used for individual analysis of park sites and facilities.

**Greenways:** A corridor of undeveloped land, typically along a river or between urban centers, reserved for recreational use or environmental preservation.

**Level of Service Standards:** Specific measurements to determine whether adequate provisions have been made for facilities and services. Level of service (LOS) standards are measures of the amount (and/or quality) of the public facility which must be provided to meet a community's basic needs and expectations.

Level of service measures are typically expressed as ratios of facility capacity to demand by existing and projected future users. For instance, the amount of parks currently needed may be determined by comparing the ratio of existing park acres per 1,000 population to the desired level of parks relative to population.

**Non-Motorized:** All forms of pedestrian movement not dependent on a motor or engine, i.e. walking, bicycling, in-line skating, etc.

**Open space:** Any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, dedicated, designated or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment, or for the use and enjoyment of owners and occupants of land adjoining or neighboring such open space.

**Passive recreation:** Generally encompasses the less intensive range of outdoor activities (hiking, bird-watching, picnicking) compatible with preserving natural resource functions such as wildlife habitat and floodplain protection.

**Recreation facility:** A place designated and equipped for the conduct of sports, leisure time activities and other customary and usual recreational activities.

